

7 4. (Amended) The footwear of claim [1] 24, wherein at least some of the plurality of ~~holes~~ *hollow passages* are defined by the first sheet and support members.

5. (Amended) The footwear of claim [1] 24, wherein the hollow passages are filled with air.

6. (Amended) The footwear of claim [1] 24, wherein the hollow passages are elongated.

7 7. (Amended) The footwear of claim [1] 24, wherein at least one of the ~~elongated~~ hollow passages has cross-section that is either circular, ovoid, or triangular in shape.

7 8. (Amended) The footwear of claim [1] 24, wherein the support members define a first type of elongated passage with a first cross-section shape and a second type of elongated passage with a second cross-section shape.

9. (Amended) The footwear of claim [1] 24, wherein the instep guard includes a resilient material.

10. (Amended) The footwear of claim [1] 24, wherein the instep guard is positioned on an underside of the instep portion of the footwear.

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